

So much for freedom of speech

Published: January 13, 2026, 9:41 am

If last week was about anything it was about freedom of speech.

I believe in freedom of speech. I admit, I think it is a right matched with the obligation (and I mean, obligation) not to abuse, but that does not stop it being a right.

In this context it is odd that I might want to draw attention to a piece on the Guido Fawkes blog, which rarely recognises that obligation to act responsibly, but on this occasion it is appropriate to do so, [via this screenshot](#):

In the week when freedom of speech has been the highest priority on the international agenda and in the week when the UK prime minister went to Paris to supposedly affirm that right the UK Electoral Commission is writing to bloggers to suppress their right to comment in accordance with the right to free speech.

You could not make it up. This is the UK in 2015: a country where freedom of speech is now denied to vast numbers of people and organisation who quite reasonably would wish to comment on, but not campaign in, the political process in the run up to a general election, but are denied the right to do so.

If the UK parliamentarians who are now saying they support Charlie Hebdo's right to comment had one iota of credibility they would now pass emergency legislation in the UK to remove the restriction on blogger's right to comment in this country.

I regret I can't see it happening.

And for the record, I do not think this Act applies to this blog for the simple reason that however numbers were calculated I do not believe it could ever be construed that Tax Research LLP comes anywhere near the monetary limits laid down in law.